

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANJUL 00651 01 OF 02 222227Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /011 W
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R 211730Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANJUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5464
INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR
USICA WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 BANJUL 651

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/W
USICA FOR ECA/AF

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SCUL OEXC GA
SUBJ: COUNTRY PLAN PROPOSAL FOR CULTURAL EXCHANGE, FY-79 AND FY-80

REF: STATE 057880

1. EMBASSY'S SUBMISSION FOR FUTURE CULTURE EXCHANGE PROGRAM SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WITH FOLLOWING FACTORS IN MIND. OUR CURRENT PROGRAM IS GUIDED BY LAST COUNTRY PLAN SUBMITTED IN MAY 1976 AS 76 BANJUL A-22. LOCAL SITUATION HAS NOT CHANGED APPRECIABLY DURING PAST 24 MONTHS, AND THEREFORE OUR ESSAY ON BILATERAL COMMUNICATION RELATIONSHIP FLOWS NATURALLY FROM THIS EARLIER REPORT. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM IN THE GAMBIA IS ALMOST SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF CHARGE. CURRENT INCUMBENT WILL BE REASSIGNED THIS SUMMER, AFTER THREE YEARS AT POST. HE IS RELUCTANT TO TIE SUCCESSOR TO PRECONCEIVED ARRANGEMENTS THAT WOULD LEAVE NEW PERSON LITTLE ROOM FOR MANOUVRE OVER NEXT TWO YEARS, OR DURATION HIS ASSIGNMENT. THEREFORE, POST SUBMITS GENERAL EXCHANGE PROJECT PROPOSALS AS OUR BEST JUDGEMENT REGARDING OVER-ALL DIRECTION OF PROGRAM. DETAILS SHOULD BE LEFT TO NEW CHARGE. AS WE DO NOT KNOW EXTENT OF FUTURE ICA SUPPORT FOR USIS-TYPE PROGRAMMING IN THE GAMBIA, WE WOULD FIND UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 BANJUL 00651 01 OF 02 222227Z

IT DIFFICULT TO SUBMIT THEMATIC PROJECT PROPOSALS AT THIS TIME.

2. THE GAMBIA IS ALMOST UNIQUE IN AFRICA AS A PRACTISING DEMOCRACY, WITH A FREE PRESS, LIVELY OPPOSITION, INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY, AND DEEP RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. AS SUCH, IT SHARES MANY POLITICAL IDEALS WITH THE UNITED STATES. GAMBIA SOCIETY IS OPEN AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO OUTSIDERS WHO HAVE AT LEAST SOME SENSITIVITY

TO WEST AFRICAN CULTURE. MEDIA IN THE GAMBIA ARE UNDERDEVELOPED, BUT INCLUDE A GOVERNMENT RUN COUNTRY-WIDE RADIO STATION, AN OFFICIAL THRICE-WEEKLY PRINTED NEWS BULLETIN, AND SEVERAL ONE-MAN NEWSPAPERS WHICH APPEAR SEVERAL TIMES A MONTHS. US-PRODUCED ITEMS ENJOY READY ACCESS TO THESE LOCAL MEDIA.

3. A FORMER BRITISH COLONY, THE COUNTRY'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IS STILL BOUND BY TRADITIONAL MODELS. NONETHELESS A CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT UNIT HAS BEGUN TO TACKLE PROBLEMS WHICH WILL MAKE MAJOR CHANGES IN PRIMARY AND ULTIMATELY SECONDARY SCHOOLING. A NASCENT UNIVERSITY MAY YET OPEN ITS DOORS IN TWO TO THREE YEARS TIME. GROWING NUMBERS OF US-EDUCATED GAMBIANS ARE ASSUMING POSITIONS IN EDUCATION AS WELL AS IN OTHER KEY ELEMENTS OF GAMBIAN ADMINISTRATION. THESE INDIVIDUALS BRING A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE AND TEND TO BE IMPATIENT WITH OLD RIGIDITIES.

4. EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE GAMBIA AND THE UNITED STATES (ALMOST ALL OF IT PRIVATE) HAS GROWN TREMENDOUSLY DURING THE PAST DECADE. OVER 300 GAMBIANS ARE CURRENTLY STUDYING AT US UNIVERSITIES, AND SEVERAL DOZEN HAVE RETURNED HOME WITH IMPRESSIVE ACADEMIC DEGREES. UNEMPLOYMENT IS A PROBLEM, EVEN FOR SOME HIGHLY EDUCATED INDIVIDUALS, BECAUSE OF SCANT LOCAL RESOURCES AND THE MODEST DIMENSIONS OF THE ECONOMY. RESTLESSNESS AMONG THE YOUNG HAS BEEN THE PREDICTABLE RESULT. BUT THE LOCAL CLIMATE REMAINS HIGHLY FAVORABLE TO OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT, WHILE A GENERALLY LIBERAL ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY CONTINUES TO UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 BANJUL 00651 01 OF 02 222227Z

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PAGE 01 BANJUL 00651 02 OF 02 230529Z
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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 BANJUL 0651

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/W
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5. CULTURAL EXCHANGE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A MAJOR COMPONENT OF THE US PROGRAM FOR THE GAMBIA. GROWING NUMBERS OF SENIOR OFFICIALS HAVE BENEFITTED FROM THE INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM, AND MORE ARE EAGER TO PARTICIPATE. THE US IMAGE IN THE GAMBIA IS REASONABLY GOOD AND SERIOUS BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION ARE VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTANT. THE ROOTS PHENOMENON HAS BROUGHT AT LEAST TEMPORARY FAME TO THE HOME OF ALEX HALEY'S AFRICAN ANCESTOR, WHICH HAS IN TURN GENERATED THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT INFLUX OF AMERICAN VISITORS TO THE GAMBIA. GOVERNMENT EFFORTS LOCALLY ARE CLEARLY AIMED AT INCREASING AND SUSTAINING THIS FLOW FROM THE UNITED STATES.

6. IN FY-78 EMBASSY HAS SPONSORED SEVEN INTERNATIONAL VISITORS (OF WHOM THREE PARTICIPATED IN MULTI-REGIONAL PROJECTS), AND WE WILL HAVE FROM THREE TO FIVE REGIONALLY FUNDED GRANTEEES (OCA AND CIP). REVERSE EXCHANGE INCLUDES ONE US RESEARCHER WHOOSE USG-SPONSORED GRANT EXPIRES IN APRIL 1979, ONE AMERICAN BASKETBALL COACH WHO REMAINS UNTIL SEPTEMBER, AND SIX DISTINGUISHED AMERICANS INVITED BY GOTG (FOR WHOM INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL PAID BY ECA). TOTAL BUDGET HAS BEEN DOLS WRINPPPM ASSUMING SAME FUNDING LEVELS OVER NEXT TWO YEARS, WE WOULD ENVISAGE PROGRAM OF SIMILAR DIMENSIONS.

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PAGE 02 BANJUL 00651 02 OF 02 230529Z

7. AMONG MULTI-REGIONAL PROJECTS OUTLINED STATE 062980, WE WOULD SUGGEST GAMBIA CANDIDATES BE CONSIDERED FOR:

A. POLITICS AND ELECTIONS - 1978

B. ISSUES IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT (BEARING IN MIND BANJUL-TUSKEGEE SISTER CITIES AFFILIATION)

C. INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

D. SMALL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

E. WATER MANAGEMENT IN ARID LANDS

F. WOMEN IN MEDIA

THE GAMBIA SHOULD ALSO CONTINUE PARTICIPATION IN CIP AND OCA.

8. FOR INDIVIDUAL LEADER GRANTS CANDIDATES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AMONG MINISTERS; MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT; LOCAL GOVERNMENT

(ESPECIALLY DIVISION COMMISSIONERS AND DISTRICT CHIEFS);
SENIOR OFFICIALS IN EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE, AND HEALTH; MINISTRY
OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS; AND SENIOR ECONOMIC PLANNERS. ONCE NEW
CHARGE HAS ASSUMED DUTIES, HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SELECT CATEGORIES
AND PROJECTS WITH MORE PRECISION WELL BEFORE COMMENCEMENT
FY-79. WYGANT

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